

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15, 17 and 18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following Remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The outstanding Office Action rejects claims 1-14, 15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yata et al. in view of Okamura et al., and rejects claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Yata et al., Okamura et al. and further in view of Draaijer et al.

First, it is respectfully noted Okamura et al. is not a valid prior art reference. That is, Okamura et al. is not a 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b) or (e) reference. In more detail, Okamura et al. has a filing date of March 21, 2000, which is later than September 14, 1999, which is the filing date of the present application. Further, Okamura et al. has an issue date of October 21, 2003. Therefore, Okamura et al. is not a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) (i.e., the publication date of October 21, 2003 is not prior to the filing date of the present application, which is September 14, 1999). Further, Okamura et al. is not a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), because the issued date of October 21, 2003 is not more than one year prior to the filing date of the present application. Finally, Okamura et al. is not a prior art reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), because the filing date of Okamura et al. (September 14, 1999) is not prior to the filing date of the present application. Therefore, because Okamura et al. is not a

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valid prior art reference, it is respectfully submitted the rejections noted in the outstanding Office Action are moot and the pending claims are allowable.

Further, claim 17 has been amended to depend on claim 15, rather than on canceled claim 16.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, David A. Bilodeau, at the telephone number listed below.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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